

INTELLOFAX 22

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1A

DATE DISTR. 3 JUL 50

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

25X1

COUNTRY China/Hong Kong

SUBJECT Travel Controls Between
Shanghai and Hong Kong

PLACE
ACQUIRED

DATE OF
INFO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Train travel from Shanghai to Hong Kong requires a travel permit, according to announcements in the press by the Military Control Commission. Applications for the permit include the usual personal history statement and also the reason for making the trip and the length of absence intended. Permits are secured from the Shanghai Central Police Headquarters on Foochow Road. Persons who travel regularly between Shanghai and Hong Kong state that permits are seldom required on the train; a Shanghai residence certificate and letters showing the reason for travel, such as visits to relatives or illness in the family, are the only documents which need be shown. Travel permits are mandatory only when a residence certificate is lacking.
2. Departing travelers at the North Station, Shanghai, are examined in the space beyond the waiting rooms and near the entrance to trains. Inspections are made by a search party, usually consisting of three men and two matrons, in railway uniform, with armbands reading "Inspection Group" (糾察隊); they are not members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Since the number of inspectors is quite inadequate, personal and baggage inspections are cursory; the inspector runs his hand quickly over the person front and back, and baggage often passes without being opened. A thorough spot check is made of about five percent of the passengers. The search party appears to be primarily interested in discovering gold or United States currency.
3. After the first clearance, passengers enter the train platform, being given a quick body search, with arms above their heads, at the gate. Visitors are permitted to enter the departure platform if they can show residence certificates. Platform guards are very lenient, however, and will accept almost any kind of identification for visitors.
4. Passengers on boarding the train are again spot checked by the train guards, who are PLA soldiers with armbands reading "Garrison" (警備). As soon as the train starts, the soldiers, who are usually assigned four to a train, begin working through the coaches in pairs, beginning from both ends of the train. They make no body or baggage searches but only scrutinize the compartments. The soldiers are usually young and hurry through their examination in an embarrassed manner, while the passengers all sit silent. Passengers who show travel permits are not questioned; those who have only

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Document No. 25X1
No Change in Class.
☒ Declassified
Class. Changed To: TS S D
Auth: HR 70-2
Date: 16 June 78 By: [Signature]

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.
Next Review Date: 2008

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residence certificates are usually asked for some other supporting evidence of reasons for the trip. Once a complete check of the train has been completed, the guards return to the coaches, on long journeys, only after major stops. Several general checks are thus made during a long trip.*

5. At stops, there are no restrictions on passengers leaving the train or visiting with friends. Fences along the right-of-way are often full of merchants and onlookers, and small purchases can be made through the palings. Some vendors with wares on trays or kettles of tea are allowed to enter the station platforms and sell to passengers in the coaches. En route, stations were alerted by field telephone of an air-raid threat, and the train is stopped. The locomotive is removed and camouflaged with shrubbery, in addition to the slight camouflage it nearly always carries when traveling, and passengers are ordered to alight. No baggage is allowed to be removed; the empty cars are sealed against theft.
6. Upon the train's arrival in Canton, four or five customs officials make a cursory inspection, acting as supervisors for PLA soldiers who do the actual work. Before March 1950, all inspections were made by PLA personnel, but the regular customs inspectors then returned to work. Their attitude, however, is uninterested, since they realize they are so understaffed that inspection can be only a formality. Spot searches, of varying degrees of severity, are made on passengers, but little attention is paid to baggage unless it is heavy and suspected of containing gold.
7. After leaving the customs office, passengers proceed to Shenchuan (114-08, 22-32), where they undergo another baggage search, this time by PLA soldiers, who pay special attention to heavy articles. From there, travelers walk across the bridge to the Hong Kong Revenue Office, where they are again examined by British (or usually Indian) guards and a Chinese staff. Until May 1950, persons showing a Military Control Commission travel permit were allowed to enter the colony without difficulty; during May, the requirement was changed to a Hong Kong entry visa.** Even without a permit, travelers who show business or family reasons for entry are usually allowed to proceed without too much trouble. All officials except the British officers accept bribes. Any gold found is confiscated.

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- * Comment: Travelers from the north have given the frequency of train inspections as a reason for preferring to journey by sea, where the dockside inspection is the last. 25X1A

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- ** Comment: Immigration restrictions in Hong Kong were tightened in May, but Chinese and British alike admitted that there was not sufficient staff to make the new regulations effective.

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